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Grey, Doris oral history interview

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Interview with Doris Grey by Steve Hochstadt
Shanghai Jewish Community Oral History Project
Summary Sheet and Transcript

Interviewee
Grey, Doris

Interviewer
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Date
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Extent
2 audiocassettes

Place
Laguna Hills, California

Biographical Note

Doris Grey was born in Hindenburg, Upper Silesia, in 1912. She studied nursing and worked in Breslau, before moving to Berlin and becoming head nurse at the Krankenhaus der Jüdischen Gemeinde. In Berlin, she married William Cohn. On May 5, 1940, they left Berlin for Genoa, where they sailed to Shanghai on the "Conte Verde." She worked at the Emigrants Hospital in the Ward Road Heim as head nurse, while her husband continued his work as an art dealer. In January 1947 they left Shanghai on the "Marine Lynx" for the United States. After becoming widowed, she married Benny Grey, who survived the war in the Soviet Union. The live in California.

Transcript

Steve Hochstadt: So this is the hospital that you worked in before . . .

Doris Grey: Jewish hospital.

SH: Jüdisches Krankenhaus.

DG: Krankenhaus der Jüdischen Gemeinde. You speak a little German?

SH: Yes, I do.

DG: You understand?

SH: Yes.

DG: Yeah. Jüdisches Hospital Berlin.

SH: This is wonderful.

BREAK IN RECORDING

DG: This is where we had the license, but this is some kind of a pass in Shanghai.

SH: In, written in Chinese?

DG: So we can pass the Bridge, to pass the Bridge, you know, because . . .

SH: To pass across the Garden Bridge?

DG: Yeah.

SH: So this is during the, the Japanese occupation?

DG: Well, Japanese always, they always occupied.

SH: And your name is Derschin, Dorschin?

DG: Yeah, Dorchen.

SH: Cohn.

DG: And Lena, Sara, you know. Here is the *Kennkarte*. That's right, that's the *Kennkarte*.

SH: When you say you were the only licensed nurse in Shanghai, that's, the other nurses, you, the only license from Germany, you mean, the only one who had a license from Germany?

DG: No, to have a Chinese license.

SH: I see.

DG: I couldn't find it.

SH: Why were you the only one? Why didn't other people get Chinese licenses? Or were you the best trained?

DG: No, because you were not qualified.

SH: I see.

DG: This we were when we came, when we arrived, and when we were here two years already. That was my husband's . . .

SH: William Cohn. And so you opened a, an art gallery in New York on Lexington Avenue?

DG: This I am during my training, I, was first a baby nurse, it was in Breslau. This is Berlin.

SH: So this is in the Jüdisches Krankenhaus?

DG: This is in Berlin, too.

SH: Is this you in the middle? There you are, I see. Yes.

DG: Yeah and this is Dr. Gossels, he just passed away half a year ago, he was my best friend. Here I was in charge, here I was the supervisor, already. And that was in my room with my late husband, and this was in the hospital, too . . .

SH: In Shanghai.

DG: . . . some evening during the war, no that's all Berlin.

SH: Oh, this is all Berlin.

DG: Now, this is Shanghai, with part of my staff, that's Dr. Marcuse. He was in charge, he was the surgeon, first there was a Dr. Flater, he passed away.

SH: He was in charge of the hospital?

DG: He was in charge of the surgical . . .

SH: I see.

DG: . . . department. That's a Dr. Neger, he was from Vienna, and . . .

SH: So this is the entire staff?

DG: No, not the entire staff, part of it. Here, I was giving an anesthesia. Now this is how we lived in the ghetto in the lane with our window. [unintelligible] Here. Here is a picture.

SH: I see.

DG: That's where we lived, in the ghetto.

SH: So, this is a, this is a brick house, this was a substantial house.

DG: It was a hut, more or less.

SH: And these children were, lived all around you, they lived in the lane, too?

DG: Sure, sure, sure. This is when we first came, there was a park, this was in the French Concession. Afterwards, we didn't have any parks or anything. It was boarded, that meant we couldn't go in there. This is the English hospital, I worked in the beginning in the English Settlement, Country Hospital.

SH: I see, this is quite a big building.

DG: Here I was sitting in a rickshaw.

SH: And whose children, children are these?

DG: No, those are my cousin's children.

SH: I see.

BREAK IN RECORDING

SH: I would like you to start, if you would, maybe where you were born and when you were born and . . .

DG: Yeah.

SH: . . . then a little about your family.

DG: I was born in 1912 in Hindenburg, Upper Silesia. And I lived there until I finished school

and when I was, I wanted to be pediatrician, but Hitler came and it was out of question. So I, I choose first to be a baby nurse and I, I worked towards my degree [unintelligible] after, after one year, after two years in Breslau at the Städtisches Säuglingheim. And then I went back home, and in the meantime my brother was a full-fledged lawyer in Berlin. That was January 1933, he was there for three years already and had a very, very successful practice and everything. Under Hitler, he had to stop as a lawyer and he became a car dealer, of all things. Of course he didn't like it, he played more tennis. And just to give you a short history of our family, he emigrated to South Africa, Durban, where he lived for twenty-seven years. And thereafter, after his son finished school and his son decided to study in Israel, and he is real Israeli. And he lives in Israel, he married a Sabra and he was, he had his bachelor degree from the University in Jerusalem, where he was accepted right away, because the English had a very good school in South Africa. And there he met his wife and they got married in '69 and went to England, where my brother was living already with his wife. They finally settled in London, they always wanted to live in London, because there the best culture and the best theater, music and so on and so forth. And Oliver and his wife Ofra studied in Manchester towards their master's degree. Ofra majored in criminology and, oh God, anthropology and she's teaching in, she was teaching in Tel Aviv, Tel Aviv University, while Oliver majored in social and political science. He is the idealist. His wife would leave there, not him. He, of all places, they had a beautiful condominium which they got when they got married in Natanya. He worked for the police and they moved to Qiryat Shemona, Qiryat Shemona is right at the border, and worked five hard years just to educate the newcomers from Yemen, you know, who didn't have any idea how to live, hygiene and everything. He did that for five years. And now they have their own house, and live in a beautiful place. It's, I will show you pictures of it and it's called Kefar Vradim, which means Rose Town. We hope to see them this year, we hope, we don't know. If our health is permitting, it's a long trip. So they are doing all right and they have two sons, Noam, who is like his name says, it means pleasant, an excellent student. My brother contributed to his education, too, that's what his parents say, if it wouldn't be for my brother. He finished already high school, is seventeen years old, he graduated with flying colors, 795 points out of 800. And he is accepted at any university, any faculty, but he has to go to the army first. So he'd like to go there as soon as possible, you know, to get through. And, but he wants to specialize while he's in the army, because he likes to work at the radio station for the army. So he passed all his tests, there were about five hundred applying, now there are ten left and he has to pass another examination in October, which we hope he will, because you know, he is, they are more qualified for special work and everything. Of course he'll have to go through their training. That's, that's the little one [unintelligible] . That's my only brother, he's eight and a half years older than I am. For him, I'm still his little sister. Now myself, from Breslau I visited my brother in Berlin and my mother always said to me, "As much as I love you, but you go to a bigger place and see that you can stay there." So sure enough, but it was close to the first of April '33, so we went first to a hospital which was run by the city, very well known, Virchow Hospital. There was a red matron, she refused me right away. She didn't know what was what's coming to her, you know, under Hitler.

SH: You mean she was a communist, is that what you are saying?

DG: Yeah, so . . .

SH: So why did she refuse you?

DG: Pardon me?

SH: Why did she refuse you?

DG: Well, everyone at that time refused Jews. But she, she asked for the name, you know, where are you born, what's your religion? So I knew already. So my sister and I said, "You know what, we try with the Jews." So of course, I had to go through certain things, you know, to be accepted, red tape and meeting with the president and this one and Professor Strauss and who else. And so I was there and I got [unintelligible] . I could take my state boards a little earlier than the others on account of my former education. And, and then I worked myself up, I was first the charge nurse, and then assistant head nurse, head nurse, and then I was in charge of the medical floor, hundred twenty beds, under Professor Strauss. And then I left, we left Shanghai, for Shanghai during the war, May fifth, 1940. We come to Innsbruck, the "Conte Verde", our boat, did not leave until the tenth of May. But my then husband wanted to show me a little of the environs, you know, we couldn't get out anymore, we didn't have any passport. So first of all, to get out, you know, you had to make all those lists of what you take along and most of it was crossed out.

SH: Would you explain, no one has told me about that. Would you explain about making the lists, and who made you make the lists?

DG: Well, you, you got it from the government, you know, *für Auswanderer*. You were not allowed to take any money, ten Mark, and certain things, most of the things you couldn't take.

Benny Gray: Tax, you had to pay the tax, proof that you paid the tax.

DG: And of course you had to pay *Auswanderung* tax.

SH: How much was that? A lot of money?

DG: Not for us, because we left everything there. If I tell you, my best crystal I gave the packer, the people who packed everything. And at that time I lived in the hospital already, my husband too. That was included in my salary, you know, and so we just had a room and I had two rooms on, on the medical floor, you know, and of course, everything free. And so . . .

SH: Who were the packers? Who are the packers?

DG: The packers? They were sent by the government. So there was another thing. My mother was there, came to say goodbye to us and to help us with the packing. And we had a date with the packers, like, they come on Monday. They came on Saturday, but we had the order from Gestapo to get our passes and, and the permit to pack ourselves for Monday. So the Gestapo was in one of the former Jewish community houses. The temples were all burned down. That was 1940, May. And so I went in my nurse's uniform, and we were standing there, didn't say anything and luckily there was an older gentleman who was working there and he came to me, "Oh little nurse, what are you waiting for?" So I, so I told him my story. "*Ach, kommen Sie herein, kommen Sie herein*," one who wasn't that way, and he said, "What do you need?" And I told him that we

actually have an appointment for Monday, but the packers are there. So he said, "Wait here, wait here. Don't get upset. It will take some time." He brought me the papers. There could be otherwise, too, so that was lucky. So we came home and they packed everything. And, you see, one of them was a supervisor and he saw to it that you don't take anything you're not allowed. For instance, you see, they had the lists there already and what they didn't allow you, they crossed off and you couldn't take. So among those, the most important books, you know, art books my husband wanted to take along, crossed off altogether. And then he put down the map with prints. Do you know who Käthe Kollwitz is?

SH: Yes.

DG: We were good friends with her. My husband was very friendly with her, it goes too far. And we had a lot of her early, early originals and, really, all the Kollwitzes you see in America come from us. You see some at colleges, my husband used to go as far as Boston to the universities. And, so that they didn't cross off, so we took them. That was a big, big thing and, you know, they packed, when we came home, my mother said, "They are still waiting." They wanted to go already, because we didn't have the permit. So my mother had some beer there for them. Where she got it from, I don't know, but we gave them to eat and that was whatever we had to eat. And then they packed and, you see, they tried, "Don't you have anything else you want?" We said, "No, we don't have anything." And most of the things we packed, we found, we got back, you know. And so we left on the fifth of May, 1940.

SH: Could I ask another question about the packing?

DG: Yeah.

SH: The list that they had was a list of your things, they had a list of everything that you owned?

DG: Yeah, yes.

SH: You had to make a list of all the things you owned?

DG: Of everything we want to take away.

SH: And you sent that to the Gestapo?

DG: That went to the *Packhof*, they called it. They controlled it again. It's a so-called, it's a customs, you know, and they took out what that they wanted to. I, I was fully equipped to do private nursing, you know, from rubber glove to enema can and everything. So part, and instruments and everything, part of that, they stole. And a few other things.

SH: So that was after the packing? All your stuff went to the . . .

DG: Yeah, it's a *Packhof*, it's a customs, you know. But so we went to Munich, and in Munich somebody was waiting for all the people who go to Shanghai. We were about thirty-three people.

SH: On the train, this is a train?

DG: At the station and they just say Central Verein, Jewish Central Verein, so we knew already. So they collected us and brought us to a place and gave us to eat.[1]

SH: In Munich?

DG: Yeah, in Munich. A kind of *Vereinshaus*, you know. And then all we had was ten Mark, and a little bit, you know, in case we need something on the train. But before we came to the border at Innsbruck, we, we gave what we had over to the conductor or whoever, you know, the station. So the train arrives in Innsbruck during the night at two or three o'clock in the morning. The Gestapo men, "Everybody who wants to go to Shanghai, out. 'Conte Verde' doesn't go." Here we were stateless, you know, we had a stateless passport. Innsbruck was *Judenrein*, no Jews. There was an old, an older man who worked at the station, he said, "Come on," and he put us all in the, you know, in Europe you have first, second, third, fourth class, in the waiting room for fourth class. So, and my husband went to him and another gentleman, if we could make a phone call, a collect phone call. So my husband's best friends [unintelligible] was the doctor in our hospital and he called him and told him what happened. So he said we should give him the number and he will call back, he will see what he can do. So they got in touch with the Hilfsverein in Munich. The Hilfsverein in Munich ordered an extra *Wagon* from the, for the next train, which went back from Innsbruck to Munich and we went back. So again the Central Verein sent somebody to pick us up and we were there the next evening, and they said to us, "You will try again, you will go again." So next night we went again and we made it.

SH: You didn't stop at Innsbruck, you went all the way?

DG: Well, we had to stop at the border. We went right near the Brenner, you know, to Innsbruck and then to Mailand, Genoa. And on the tenth of May we made it in the boat. We were on the way four weeks.

SH: "Conte Verde".

DG: "Conte Verde". We had to have, each of us, four hundred dollars to be allowed to get into the Settlement, the French Settlement. We couldn't take my mother along, because we just didn't have the money, you know. So we thought when we arrive, we put four hundred dollars down for her and she will come.[2]

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[1] The Central Verein Deutscher Staatsbürger Jüdischen Glaubens was founded in 1893 to secure full civil rights for German Jews.

[2] Until August, 1939, entry into Shanghai was entirely free of restrictions. In August, the Japanese, upon the urging of Shanghai's Jewish leaders, announced the closing of Shanghai to further refugees from Europe. In October, this was modified so that refugees with $400 "guarantee money" could enter.

SH: Where was she?

DG: So, my mother had everything ready in '39 to go to South Africa and it was very difficult for my brother to get, it was very hard to get into South Africa. But, that I found out later, because I was still in Germany, she didn't go, so she ended up in Auschwitz. So we arrived in Shanghai the seventh, no the sixth of May, and we were running after our money. Italy entered the war, and we were running after our money for a week or longer, and we finally got it.

SH: The four hundred dollars?

DG: The four hundred dollars in the smallest notes you can imagine, because the higher the note, the more value of them was the dollar, you know. If you had it in, in dollar notes, it was, wasn't worthwhile.

SH: Now how where did the four hundred dollars come from if you only could take out . . .

DG: From, from business friends of ours.

SH: But if you could only take out . . .

DG: From an art . . .

SH: . . . ten dollars from, from Germany, or ten Marks from Germany, how did you get the four hundred dollars out?

DG: The four hundred dollars were sent from Switzerland. You see, my husband had very good Gentile friends, who were art experts too, and had an art colony. As a matter of fact, he had the Kollwitz Verlag and he went for us to Sweden and to Norway to bring out art. You see, he could do it.

SH: So some of your things went to Norway and Sweden?

DG: And then to America. And we had a very good business friend, who we didn't know personally in Baltimore, and he started us out, so to speak. But he had some art of ours and sold it already, you know, so we had some money.

SH: And then the money came to you to Shanghai?

DG: Yeah, no, the money came to us in America. My husband had, had a brother who was a psychoanalyst in New York, but he didn't do anything for us.

SH: So this money only came to you after you left Shanghai? I guess I don't understand.

DG: The four hundred dollars were there.

SH: Were where?

DG: In Shanghai, it had to be there. It was sent to Shanghai. That we had. And we never touched it. That was our reserves.

SH: Could I, could I, I just find this a bit confusing, I want to make sure I understand. Here you're in Berlin.

DG: Yeah.

SH: Some of your art is taken by your husband's friend . . .

DG: Friends.

SH: . . . to Sweden.

DG: Bought. To Sweden and that . . .

SH: And then sold there, or sent there?

DG: Sent to America.

SH: Sent to America.

DG: It was sold here.

SH: But you're still in Berlin at this time?

DG: Oh yes.

SH: So it's sold here in the United States?

DG: Yes.

SH: And then where does that money go?

DG: And that my brother-in-law opened, he took care of it.

SH: So did that money stay here?

DG: It went to his, yeah, in New York.

SH: The money stayed here in New York?

DG: Yeah.

SH: So when did you get that money back?

DG: When we came to New York.

SH: When you came to New York. Okay, so that's different than the four hundred dollars?

DG: That's different.

SH: How about the four hundred dollars? How does that money get to Switzerland, and eventually to Shanghai?

DG: It didn't. Our friend, *wie sagt man, er burgt für uns*?

BG: He guaranteed, he . . .

DG: You know . . .

SH: You can say it in German, that's all right.

DG: Yeah, *er hat für uns geburgt. Er hat gut gesagt für uns*, so to speak. So he sent the money.

SH: The friend, the same friend who . . .

DG: Yeah. That was also . . .

SH: He sent the money.

DG: . . . a professor of history [unintelligible] , they had, I think it still exists. He's dead for a long time in Bern and my husband used, he used to come to visit us and my husband was in business with him, you know, from Berlin.

SH: But was the four hundred dollars your money or did he give you the money?

DG: I, partly our money, partly.

SH: I see. And so he arranged to have the money to go to Shanghai.

DG: Yes, he even sent us a hundred dollars board money when we arrived in Genoa.

SH: I see.

DG: He sent us a hundred dollars first, because we had to have board money too, on the ship.

SH: Now let me ask one more question.

DG: Yeah.

SH: You were only allowed to take out ten Marks from Germany?

DG: Right. Right.

SH: But to get to Shanghai, to get into Shanghai you have to have four hundred dollars.

DG: Right, each.

SH: If you didn't have all these connections, how is it possible to do that? It's not possible.

DG: No.

SH: So you had to have some . . .

DG: You see, those people, to live in the French, French Concession or English Settlement. Your grandfather lived where?

SH: On Bubbling Well and Seymour.

DG: Oh yeah, that's the English Settlement. And we lived in the French Concession on Avenue Haig. And the hospital, God, what was the name of the big street? It was the Country Hospital, it was right at the border. You know, sometimes, there was a lot of shooting going on, so one settlement was barricaded from the other, so sometimes I couldn't go home. I, officially I lived in the Hospital, but I lived at home, because it was within walking distance. So I will tell you right there, when the war broke out, the border was closed between the French and the English Settlement, just barricaded, and at the border was a German school. The Japanese were there and only left people through who had a passport of their land. So they didn't know then about the "J" in the passport, you know. So my, I called my husband, I said, "Willy, how do I get home? Everything is barricaded." He said, "Don't worry about it. I come with your passport and give it to you at the school. I will pass and then I pass back with you." I could go through and that's what we used then. So we, I had a cousin there, who, who had a butcher store, and he rented a room for us from a Russian, white Russian lady, Jewish people.

SH: This was arranged before you arrived?

DG: Yes. So and my cousin picked us up from the boat and the first days we were going around, you know, and the first night my cousin gave us a mosquito coil, they call it, you know, against the mosquitoes. It's like [unintelligible] and you burn it, and the mosquitoes don't like it and they leave you alone. And we put the mosquito coil on and my husband was awake and he said, "I can't sleep." I said, "I don't feel any mosquitoes." He said, "I don't see any mosquitoes either but there's something." And sure enough we put the light on and the bedbugs, full of them. So we told our landlady. So she said, "Oh, that's Shanghai, that's nothing." So we took everything out and we didn't have any money then, you know, to do anything about it, boiling water and all that. But a few days later, the phone rang and the Jewish community, they were very rich and well known, Jews from Baghdad, from Russia, all over, and in charge of the committee was the certain

Mr. Ellis Hayim, he was very well known and he did a lot for the emigrants[3] and I was asked to, whether I know English or not. I said, and what you don't know, you learn, you have an appointment in three days. So I said, "Listen, I speak a little English. What I don't know now, I wouldn't know it." You want some more coffee?

SH: I'm fine, thank you.

DG: No?

SH: It's fine.

DG: So, Benny would you turn the . . . ?

BG: Yeah.

DG: Because I have [unintelligible] . So after, so I had that appointment and he sent me to the Country Hospital and the matron asked, said they don't have any vacancy right now, but would I be willing to do private nursing? So I said yes, not thinking that she would call me right away, because we really needed some rest, after all that war time in Germany and all we went through. So sure enough, the same week, they called me. You might not believe it, my first private case.

BG: It's all right. It's all right already.

DG: There was a young Catholic priest with gonorrhea, that was my first case. So I guess he wanted to see what I will take, what I will do. I nursed him for four weeks and I was so naive then, you know, I said to him one day [unintelligible] I said, "Oh it's a nice girl, isn't it?" And he said, "I'm not interested, I'm not interested." But the, I had to do everything for him, I had to catherize him. It was not a very pleasant case, but I made two American dollars a day, that was a lot of money then. You know, for one dollar was sixteen Shanghai dollars, and you could live quite nicely, you could have a good meal every day. And Willy took his Kollwitzes and went around. There was a very well known German art store, the name was "Modern Art," and he knew of the people, because their father was well known, they come from Dresden. And . . .

SH: These are Jews or not Jews?

DG: No, non-Jews. And very soon he had a Kollwitz exhibition. So after six weeks we got an exterminator, we threw all those furnitures out and we ordered everything that just fits in our room from a French cloister, beautiful, combined closet for, for dishes and for our clothes. It was done beautifully. Then a special closet for my husband's graphic and then we ordered a beautiful set, table and two armchairs and four chairs, and they were done in a special way. On one side was straw, the other side was covered with material, so in summertime you turned it around and, you know, it was not so hot for winter time. It was perfect and everything went well and very soon we

[3] Ellis Hayim, from an influential Sephardic family, was one of the leading organizers of assistance to the newly arrived refugees.

made money and I had some more cases and then after a few months, they employed me, and I was there till we went to the ghetto. One day, we opened the newspaper and it didn't say Jews, it said, all Jewish people who came to the French or English Settlement after '38 have to move to Hongkew.[4] So we went house hunting, so to speak. House, we lived, it was a hut, you know, we lived among the lowest Chinese and downstairs was one couple living with mother, then a half floor up we were living. Again that, that gentleman who was the owner of "Modern Art," he was an architect, too, so he came and we made a drawing exactly how our furniture will fit in that small room, you know. So I remember we got the last Simmons couch at Wing On, that was a very famous department store, which, which opened up into two beds, you know. And then we had this table and on one wall that one, those two closets for art and there we had a big box, where we kept our clothes and our winter clothes. And [laughs] when we went to bed, you know, we had to move all the furniture, the chairs went on that box, so we were able to open up the bed, but this was all right. You know, we lived among the lowest Chinese, we didn't have a bathroom for three and a half years. We, we didn't know it, what's coming, if you would have known, you wouldn't want to live. And my husband was not allowed officially to do anything in his profession. But . . .

SH: Why not?

DG: What could he do in, in Hongkew?

SH: Because he couldn't get out of . . .

DG: We didn't get a pass to get out to the city. Who had money in Hongkew? There were some people who were quite well off, you know, but I'd say, I think the Grundlands, they lived in the French Concession, but they all lived in Hongkew afterwards. Mrs. Oschinsky lived in Hongkew, too.[5] But we survived, that's the main thing. So when I started out in the hospital, the hospital existed already. It was, really, it consisted of thirty-five beds with lice and straw.

SH: When did the hospital start, when was it first started?

DG: Oh, it was there already, they had two hospitals there. This was the Ward Road hospital and then they had one in, there were several *Heim*s, Chaoufoong Heim, you know, the people lived in homes.[6] You see, the people like, like Grundlands and the others like us, at least we lived in a

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[4] On February 18, 1943, the Japanese authorities in Shanghai issued an edict forcing all "stateless refugees", meaning Jewish refugees who had arrived since 1938, to move residences and businesses into a bombed-out square mile in Hongkew, the so-called Designated Area. The move had to be accomplished by May 18.

[5] See interviews with Heinz and Edith Grundland, Laguna Hills, California, June 27, 1991, and Eva Oschinsky, Laguna Hills, California, June 9, 1990.

[6] The Emigrants Hospital was first opened in the Washing Road Heim in 1939, then moved to the Ward Road Heim. Out-patient clinics also were established at some of the other *Heime*.

room, but they lived in homes. There was maybe a curtain in between each couple or so, and I have to tell you, you might not hear it from other people, I never knew that Jewish people can demoralize in such a way, it's terrible, you have no idea. It was really depressing. And so I worked at the hospital, then Dr. Marcuse came and Dr. Flater. They, Dr. Flater had to move to the District. Dr. Marcuse was allowed to live out all the time in the French Concession.

SH: Why was that? Why was he allowed to?

DG: Well, some people were, some people not, you know, and, very few, very very few. But, you know, with all the troubles and all the worries, we had regular concerts in the ghetto, we had a theater, we had opera, we had our synagogue, we had everything. Not to eat and not to dress, but we kept up our spirits. You know like the Jewish humor, you don't, but it was very, very hard, it really was, I tell you. I went sometimes to the, then we needed people, we needed more beds, we had more patients. We, we bought another house, the hospital consisted of house one and house two later on. We couldn't do enough for the people. You know, I remember one case, for instance, people came in with wrong diagnosis, too, at times. I remember one patient, she came, I was called, I had to come right away, an emergency appendicitis. So I look at the woman, and she said to me, she has to go to the bathroom. So I gave her the bedpan. I take the bedpan away, I called the doctor, I said, "Look . . .

END TAPE 1, SIDE A

BEGIN TAPE 1, SIDE B

DG: So I mean, I had the experience already from the other hospital, but, you know, if you don't watch, you know, if nobody sees it, she might have been operated on. And now, the people who worked there . . .

SH: The doctors, you mean?

DG: Pardon me?

SH: The doctors, you mean?

DG: The doctors were all right, they were all qualified doctors from Europe, you know, from Vienna and from Germany, and mostly Viennese. The surgeons, we have Germans, he was the Chief Surgeon. And then we started to train people. So we gave classes and we had to take the examinations, and, for instance, I knew a girl who was a tailor, so I knew she will be good with getting the sutures and we trained her and later on she, she was even operating nurse in New York, you know.

SH: So you were trying to train nurses and helpers.

DG: Yes, we trained, we gave courses and after the war, we were supported by the Joint,

American Joint, and by the time I left, it was a real hospital with hundred seventy-five beds, with all the medication, trained people, everything you need in a good hospital. But during the war years, we didn't have anything. We just had aspirin. And you know, after the war, I had control of everything. For instance, you know, people tried to make business, black market, so I had to save, I could only replace antibiotic with the empty, I had to show the empty vial, otherwise I wouldn't get it.

SH: To whom? Whom did you have to show it to?

DG: In the pharmacy.

SH: I see.

DG: Yes. And we were full equipped and also with the help of the yeshiva, so I had to, and I had to promise him to keep everything kosher for the help they gave us, because of the yeshiva *bochers*.

SH: What kind of help, what kind of help did they give you?

DG: They gave us money . . .

SH: I see.

DG: . . . to support the hospital.

SH: During the war, was this . . . ?

DG: After the war.

SH: After the war.

DG: So I had to run after everybody, you know, put the knives, if they made, if they mixed it up with milk and *Fleisch*. It was nothing. But we called them the yeshiva *bochers*, because they were in the main street, in the Stuart Road during the black market with the dollars after the war. So they would go, "How much is the Lockchen today?" The word "dollar" couldn't be mentioned. So and, as I said, after the war it was fine. But we had terrible cases, among them we had nine Polish people who left the District without permission. There was a person in charge, his name was Ghoya, a Japanese. And he was the most dreaded person in the District. He, he was hitting the people and made it very difficult to get a passport.[7] My husband got a pass twice. I never went out, all those years.

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[7] Kanoh Ghoya was a Japanese official in the Bureau of Stateless Refugee Affairs. Ghoya was charged with issuing passes for refugees who wished to leave the ghetto for business purposes during the day. His capriciousness and occasional brutality are remembered by all who came into contact with him.

SH: You never left the . . .

DG: At that time anyway . . .

SH: . . . never left the District?

DG: No, I never left the District. It was very, very difficult. But you know, one night, my late husband was a pessimist, just the opposite of Benny, and it was August, beginning of August, and he said, "Something is going on. I can see the planes, American planes, going up and they are writing . . ."

BREAK IN RECORDING

DG: But before that, one day, especially, we were sitting outside and having lunch and all of a sudden, at first we didn't know what it was, they bombed just our District. And people in the street, they were torn completely, couldn't find them, by the bombs. They brought the people in, I tell you, thirty-seven people among our refugees died.[8] And I was worried, what happened to my husband. All of a sudden, he came with a bundle, you know, and he had all our papers. [unintelligible] Our lane was completely down.

SH: So your home was . . .

DG: No. Everything was gone. But somehow they, they built it up. So my husband said, and then we could see them, they were flying, they didn't do anything any more and after the war we found out, we said, "Those dumb Americans. They bombed us. Didn't they know we lived there?" But what we don't know, the Japanese had their factories there for all the materials for the, you know, machine guns. So they knew it and they bombed, therefore, they bombed our District.

SH: Were the wounded people brought to your hospital from the bombing?

DG: No, no, all over the District.

SH: No, I mean when they bombed . . .

DG: Yeah, they brought people, some of them were dead right away. But most of them we

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[8] Nearly every refugee remembers vividly the terrifying day, July 17, 1945, when American planes dropped bombs in the heavily settled area of Hongkew. Most can say exaactly where they were and what they were doing when the bombers struck. About thirty refugees were killed, and hundreds, perhaps thousands of Chinese and Japanese.

couldn't save.

SH: No.

DG: Most of them we couldn't save.

SH: Because you didn't have the right equipment or . . . ?

DG: Yeah, you know, no, because they were hurt so badly. And some of them were paralyzed from the waist down, you know.

SH: Did they bring the Chinese victims, too?

DG: Yeah, they brought some Chinese victims, too. We had sometimes Chinese patients, but mostly private patients. We had one floor for private patients, very few we had.

SH: And the private patients were Chinese sometimes, wealthy Chinese patients?

DG: Very, very seldom, you know, yeah.

SH: But most of your patients were refugees?

DG: Mostly refugees and you have no idea, we counted everything. People were stealing knives, forks, spoons, everything. You see, people who were not there don't know what, you had to watch, they took linen if they could. And personnel stole, too. So you had to have your eyes all open.

SH: And that was your job, having your eyes all open?

DG: Yeah, I had to control everything.

SH: Did many of your patients, or most of your patients come from these *Heime*? Were they the ones who got sick more often?

DG: What do you mean?

SH: There were some people living in the homes.

DG: Yeah. Oh, a lot of them.

SH: Did they get sick, did they get sick more often than people who weren't living in, people like you who had . . . ?

DG: No, no, no, not, not necessarily, because, you know, those people living in the homes really, they were to speak educated to, not to do anything. They got their food, there was a special place supported by the Kitchen Fund, they called it, that came mostly from Russian money. There were

a lot of rich Russian Jews who really helped. The food was mostly noodles, sweet potatoes and all that. But it was nourishing, you know. Bread they got, too. And I got my food in the hospital and I took it home, so that my husband could eat, too. After the war we got the Care parcels, and we got parcels from our relatives. And we got out relatively early, because we had preference quota. We left in January, fifteenth of January 1947.

SH: Why did you have a preference quota?

DG: Through my brother-in-law. He had a high affidavit.

SH: Because he was in the . . .

DG: Not that he did anything, for us.

SH: . . . because he was in the United States?

DG: Yes.

SH: Tell me a little, you had said, I want to know about the people who were in these homes. Why did some people stay in the homes and others not? What, were they different kinds of people, or why did they end up staying there?

DG: In the homes? Well, you see, they had what they needed in their opinion. I told you, people sank lower and lower. They demoralized. I, we, we knew many people. Some of them worked in bars, they had to make money, you know, so they worked in the bar and other jobs. And some people came before we came, before the war, so they, they could take out more, you know. But anyhow we survived.

SH: Can you tell me more about the hospital? About during the war when you didn't have, you said you had aspirin . . .

DG: No, we only had aspirin and salve here, on medication.

SH: So what could you do for people, you still did operations for people?

DG: Oh yes, sure.

SH: Did you have anesthesia?

DG: We had everything, yeah. I did a lot of anesthesia, too. Sometimes I had to assist, because we didn't have enough doctors. We had many difficulties, of course, for instance, sometimes we were out of power. So I remember one appendectomy we did with, with flashlights and then, and we even had a bicycle in there with a big flashlight, you know. So it was very difficult. And we had the other, we had lice and we had to disinfect everything and we had maternity, a lot of children were born. And, of course, we had infectious disease too, you know. On account of the circumstances, we had all, we had sometimes infections of the wound after the operation, you

know, so we had some medication, like certain antiseptics, you know, powder to put on.

SH: So it worked.

DG: It worked. It worked. But we lost three thousand people out of fifteen thousand. But mostly either they were very undernourished and had no resistance at all to whatever, to whatever sickness they had. That was the main reason, because they had no resistance no matter what we did. And some of them were so sick that you couldn't help them. There were complications like in any case today, too, diabetes, amputation and gangrene and all the everyday sickness.

SH: How did people pay to be in the hospital, or did people pay?

DG: They didn't.

SH: So you, you were, you relied on contributions?

DG: Yes.

SH: And where did the contributions come from? You said the yeshiva had given you money?

DG: They came from Russian and Indian Jews.

SH: Were there any in particular who gave a lot of money? Any names that you remember?

DG: Well, you know there were certain committees and they contributed.

SH: Which committees? Do you remember the names?

DG: But, you know, people who could pay were on the private floor.

SH: So that helped.

DG: That helped too, yes. But the average didn't have to pay. I know my husband was sick once, but of course he was my husband, so he was on the private floor, but he was in a room with several others, so he didn't mind. But we didn't have to pay.

SH: Did any private people besides the committees give money, come to give money? Or was it . . . ?

DG: You mean in our District, no.

SH: Or from outside, from the Russians, or the . . . ?

DG: Oh yes, yes.

SH: Who, who gave money? Do you remember any names?

DG: Not anymore, I don't remember the names. I know that Ellis Hayim, they were the most influence, influential people. The, the Indian Jews from Baghdad, and some Russian Jews, too.[9]

SH: Did you have to go to the committee and say we need more money for this or we need more money for that?

DG: Well, that the administrator, you know, the business administrator, we had a director.

SH: Who was that?

DG: We had first director who came from Vienna. He was director of the Allgemein Krankenhaus, what was his name, Haberfeld, an old gentleman.[10] And then, afterwards, there was [unintelligible] , he was Polish, he immigrated to Israel. It happened, I walked one day in Israel in the street, I met him. "I thought you were in America." I said, " Yes, I am, I'm visiting." And, but we had very good doctors really . . .

SH: Tell me about some of the doctors.

DG: Well, we had, the internist was a Dr. Mannheim, he came from Vienna, and he immigrated to Israel. I think he just passed away. Then we had on the surgical floor, first, Dr. Flater was in charge.

SH: How do you spell his name?

DG: F-L-A-T-E-R.

SH: Flater.

DG: He was from Berlin. And we also had Dr. Wiener from Breslau. And after Dr., after they both died . . .

SH: In Shanghai?

DG: In Shanghai. And one of our nurses died in Shanghai, too. She was in charge of surgery before I, we were both working, we were both at the Country Hospital, but I left early, she left half a year later. So we worked together and you know how she died?

BG: The Viennese doctor we met in Israel. The Viennese doctor you didn't mention.

DG: Yeah, he worked, he was not in charge. He was an assistant doctor Neger.

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[9] The Jews from Baghdad were not Indian but Persian. Most had British passports.

[10] Doris Grey was not sure of this name.

SH: Neger?

DG: From Vienna, yeah. And he immigrated to Israel, we were very good friends. I'm in touch with his wife, he passed away. And then we had a younger doctor, the Medical Department, Dr. Kraus from Vienna, very, very nice, a very good doctor and also Dr. Elias. Elias is in New York. And who else? Those were the main ones. And then we had a lady doctor, she wasn't, Dr. Landau, she was from Krakau. And we had a pharmacist, who used to have his own pharmacy in the French Concession. And then he came to Hongkew and was in charge of our pharmacy. His name was Landau, too, but they were not related. And once, this nurse, her name was Brigitte Singer.

SH: Say that again, her name.

DG: Brigitte Singer.

SH: Singer.

DG: She immigrated to Bangkok and then from Bangkok to Shanghai. And she worked in the operating room and she had a gall bladder operation. And before she had operation, we took everything out, we disinfected everything just to be sure, you know. She got *Gasbrand* after the operation.

SH: I don't understand, she got what?

DG: *Gasbrand.*

SH: What is that?

DG: You know what that is?

SH: No.

DG: Let us say, it's a certain bacillus, as soon as you open up and air gets in, it dies, it's an anaerobic. And she died, we couldn't save her. It was very tragic. Then we had another tragedy. Six babies, newborn, died in one night. And, of course, at that time we didn't know any better and they thought because it was not heated. We couldn't heat, we didn't have any we couldn't use any electricity. But we kept them with hot water bottle and blankets and everything.

SH: Was . . . ?

DG: It was a virus.

SH: It was a virus?

DG: It was a virus, we knew it afterwards.

SH: So it didn't have anything to do with the heat?

DG: No. But people were saying they died of frost cold, you know. They didn't.

SH: I spoke to Lisbeth Loewenberg, she was one, was she one of the mothers of the . . . ?

DG: Who?

SH: Loewenberg, Lisbeth Loewenberg.

DG: *Die Loewenberg, ja.*

SH: She was one of the mothers?

DG: You know, I know, Loewenstein or Loewenberg, yeah, right. You know her?

SH: She worked in the lending library. She and her husband owned the lending library, Bruno Loewenberg.

DG: Is she still alive?

SH: She is still alive.

DG: Oh yeah.

SH: She was one of the mothers of these babies?

DG: Yeah, there's another lady I know, she lives in Berlin, now I think. And it was so terrible, I met her through a friend of mine, and then she said, "You don't remember me." So strange. Well, you know, there was another nurse in charge, I mean, I couldn't be all over. She used to be a baby nurse. But this has nothing to do, she was the best nurse ever, it was a virus. So she said, "I'm Mrs Ascher, I lost my twins."

SH: So, one of, two of the six were twins?

DG: Yeah, a set of twins.

SH: Were they all in one room? Is that how the virus got . . . ?

DG: Well, you know, they stay in the nursery. Yeah.

SH: I see, so they were all in the nursery. Was it all the children in the nursery who died?

DG: There were five or six, I think.

SH: Did you know a Dr. Didner?

DG: Yeah, but he wasn't in the hospital.

SH: He wasn't in the hospital. I've just heard about him.

DG: He was on Chusan Road, a Viennese.

SH: I don't know. He was a private doctor then.

DG: Yeah.

SH: He had a private practice?

DG: Yeah.

SH: How about a Dr. Preuss?

DG: Oh, he was marvelous. I had him for my late husband. He, he was a wonderful doctor. He comes from Upper Silesia, where I come from. And my husband had cancer of the stomach, but before we knew it, you know, I had him as the first doctor from our hospital. I was supervisor of joint disease in New York. It was at that time the orthopedic hospital [unintelligible] . And I really had the best doctors, Professor Dinnerstein. And I didn't know what to do he was so miserable. So I made an appointment with Dr. Preuss, because I, I thought maybe he's [unintelligible] any sickness in New York.

SH: You had met Preuss, you had met Preuss in Shanghai?

DG: Yeah.

SH: But Preuss was in New York then.

DG: He was in New York, yeah. But he diagnosed [unintelligible] .

SH: Did Preuss work in the hospital or . . . ?

DG: No, not that I know. Well, he probably sent patients to the hospital. But I only met him when my husband had surgery.

SH: I see.

DG: And he came once to our house.

SH: Did you ever hear of a Dr. Hochstädt, Josef Hochstädt?

DG: No.

SH: He was my grandfather.

DG: No, because he was not in Hongkew.

SH: Right, he was, but he was . . .

DG: Did he ever get out of Shanghai?

SH: Oh yes, he ended up in New Jersey, working in a hospital in New Jersey. But he was good friends with Preuss.

DG: Oh, but I knew Preuss very well. Preuss, Preuss was in Berlin, wasn't he?

SH: I don't know, I think so.

DG: He, he's dead for quite some time. You see, I knew only the doctors who were connected with the hospital. Maybe your grandfather had patients at the Country Hospital, that could have been.

SH: I don't know.

DG: Yeah. When did he come to America? After the war?

SH: '49.

DG: Oh. That was pretty late already.

SH: Yes. Did you have Chinese people working at the hospital too?

DG: In our hospital? No.

SH: I mean, even as cleaning up or cooking?

DG: No.

SH: Only, only refugees.

DG: Oh, cleaning up, maybe, you know, I forgot already. No, we had emi-, we had refugees all over.

SH: Doing everything?

DG: Oh yes, of course, I remember. Mr. Stein, he was cleaning up the private floor. I always called him the one-armed, he was only using one arm, he was really *gemütlich*. He never cleaned, *Wiener Gemütlichkeit,* you know. Yeah, no, we had only Jewish people. There were enough

refugees. And there was a committee and the committee paid us all. We didn't get much.

SH: A committee for the hospital?

DG: Yeah.

SH: And who ran that committee, who was on that committee?

DG: Refugees and they were also supported by Russian money and [unintelligible] .

SH: Do you remember any of the people who were on the committee, the names of the people on the committee? Any names?

DG: No. I worked with all of them. Well, one of them, who worked very close and was in the committee was Dr. Kunfi.[11]

SH: Dr. ?

DG: Dr. Kunfi. I think he was originally Hungarian. He lived in Vienna, he was a gynecologist and he was later on, before Dr. Flater was in charge. As a matter of fact, he started out with the hospital, as a, as a surgeon. He was not a good doctor, but a very nice man. He belonged to the committee.

SH: And this committee was all in Hongkew also?

DG: Yes, yes. *Komitee*.

SH: That's what they called it?

DG: Yeah.

SH: Did it make any difference that your hospital was in China, instead of somewhere else?

DG: Well, during the war, of course. Not the Country Hospital, you know, the English hospital could be everywhere.

SH: But I mean your hospital in Ward Road.

DG: Of course.

SH: What difference did it make that it was in China? Besides being poor, besides not having

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[11] Dr. Tibor Kunfi from Vienna served on the Medical Committee of the larger Commitee for the Assistance of European Jewish Refugees in Shanghai, set up in 1938. This Committee was sometimes known as the Speelman Committee, after its first treasurer, Michel Speelman.

enough money, was there anything, was there any difference that you were in China instead of somewhere else?

DG: Yeah, of course, because the conditions we worked in. You know, I mean, if no real medical people, the nurses, the helpers, and . . .

SH: You just didn't have enough trained people?

DG: Yes.

SH: Why is it that there were, there were many doctors among the refugees, but so few nurses, why was that?

DG: Well, because . . .

SH: Did Jewish people not become nurses?

DG: You know, I tell you, Shanghai was the last place to go. And most of our nurses, just that Brigitte, she was the only one. There were no other nurses from our hospital. There was one nurse from our hospital and she didn't work as a nurse. She came later, and during the war she helped out. And she died, she was very sick, she died in our hospital. For our, then she was old to me, but she wasn't old, fifty years old she died, you know. Today, fifty is young for me.

SH: Can you tell me other important things that happened at the hospital during the time you were there? Good things or bad things or unusual things that happened?

DG: There was everything unusual, I can tell you that much. But the worst part was that we couldn't help the people, that we didn't have enough medication during the war.

SH: Would that have saved more people?

DG: We could've saved more, yeah, definitely. And then, of course, that they had no resistance because they were undernourished and maybe some of them didn't want to live under the circumstances. And I don't think we had any cases which died due to unsufficient care or malpractice, so to speak. I don't think so. Because everybody who was there really, I think we were there with a heart, we really were. You know a patient was a patient, although, most of the patients didn't think so, because we didn't have enough beds and we didn't have help and attention they should get, and we needed the beds. As soon as they got better, they had to leave. So I remember, I met a lady here, a lovely lady, and she said, "Doris, you know what you did? You sent me home." I said, "I sent you home [unintelligible] ?" She said, "Yes, I was not ready." I said, " Listen, we needed the bed for other people." She said, "Today I know it, but then, I didn't know." So that was a big problem. It's like it is here today. Any surgery, they, they do it ambulatory here. You know, who heard of cataract operation? When we were in training, the patient had to stay in bed, couldn't move. They had on each side, a sandbag. We had to feed them, it had to be dark. Everything, you know, everything changed, and so today, hopefully, the people will see or know that we did everything. You know, we had a lot of criticism, of course.

SH: From patients or . . . ?

DG: Of course.

SH: Because you had to ask them to leave quickly?

DG: Sure, sure. And on account of the restricted amount of medication and help and everything, but I think we gave them our best. I'm sure we did.

SH: So did that, did that hurt you, that you were doing your best and people . . .

DG: Yes, it did, it did. Partly, in the beginning, you know, when I came and I saw people from Shanghai here, and they were lucky to be in jewelry business or something and made it, made it big right away. "Shanghai, that hospital, what did we get there?" Nothing they had you know. But you see, people who didn't, you know how it is, what you don't go through yourself, you don't know. I, I started out as assistant head nurse on the ward in joint disease in New York and at that name my name was Cohn, at that time my name was Cohn. There was a lady from Brooklyn with an accent much worse than mine. And she said, first of all, she couldn't understand that I wasn't able to speak Yiddish. I said, "I know German, I know Hebrew. But Yiddish is not a language, it's a dialect." Then, one day, after a short time, she became very friendly with me and she knew she was taken care of. For me, the work at, at the ward was nothing, I was, everything was done right away, at time and the patients were surprised and my head nurse [unintelligible] said, "You are done already and everything, and everybody said . . . ?" I said, "This is nothing. What do you think, what kind of work I'm used to? Sometimes forty-eight hours and longer, you know. Eight hours work was nothing, you know, a day was at least twelve, sixteen hours or so. So, one day, she, that lady called me and she said, "Tell me, why did you come to Shanghai, to New York?" So I said, "Did you ever hear of a certain Mr. Adolf Hitler?" You know what her answer was? "Was it really that bad?" That shows you what you don't go through yourself, you can't imagine. Even the American Jew cannot imagine and I'm sure that woman came from Poland or somewhere that she must have experienced something, you know.

SH: So did you have to work much harder in the Shanghai hospital than in the Jüdisches Krankenhaus, or in New York?

DG: Of course. Of course, because I was in charge of everything and I was responsible. There was an operation, I had to be there. There was a delivery, I had to be there. If a baby was born, I had to be there, you know, and so.

SH: Was it unusual that a woman was in charge, that you were in charge as a woman of a hospital? Was that unusual?

DG: Well, we had, we had an office administrator. But I was in charge of the nursing staff.

SH: I see. So that was normal?

DG: Yes, oh yes, they did that everywhere. Nowadays, the nurses, you know, I wouldn't like to work in a hospital any more for nothing.

SH: Why not?

DG: Because they do, they sit at the desk and write and write and write. The nursing care is not so important. Helps do the nursing care. You see, we really did nursing care, and if I tell you, nursing care, it was nursing care. I know when Benny is in the hospital, and we were in good hospitals, I washed him from head to toe, and I did his bed when there were nurses there. Here, they do your bed, you sit out and then nothing, no p.m. care, nothing, nothing. It changed completely and so does everything in regard to medicine. I mean, an operation, you go for hernia operation, and if you are lucky, you go in at noontime and can stay one night. Maybe it's only with Medicare cases like that, I don't know.

SH: I don't know.

DG: How is it in the East? Probably the same.

SH: I think it's the same. Did you have to turn patients away, because you didn't have enough beds?

DG: In the beginning, yes. Or we, we improvised.

SH: How did you do that?

DG: A cot.

SH: A cot.

DG: Yeah. Sometimes on the floor. Because we started out with thirty-five beds. When I left, we had a real hospital with hundred seventy-five beds.

SH: What was the relationship between your hospital and the Japanese?

DG: None at all. You know, the Japanese didn't speak English and we didn't speak Japanese. And they, you know, I had a band around my arm with the red cross, so they would know we are medical people, because we were not allowed to be in the street, you know.

SH: At night.

DG: So I would go with Dr. Neger if they called us. The Japanese soldiers, they were walking, you know, and watching us. They would come, "Wuh wuh," couldn't talk, you know. What are you doing here? So I said, "Wuh wuh."

SH: Pointed to your red cross?

DG: Right, right. It was curfew, you know, we were not allowed to be out.

SH: So they didn't watch over you or do anything about your hospital?

DG: They might have come, you know, to see if everything is in order for inspection. But we had other inspection and it came from the Committee or higher up, you know, the people who gave money.

SH: They would come sometimes?

DG: Yes. Yeah.

SH: Did they ever say things to you, "You should do this, or you shouldn't do that?"

DG: No, no. They were always very understanding. You know, we, they knew we did our best anyway. They praised us already after we started, after a short time, even with the few things we had, that we changed the whole thing, cleaning up, and so on. The personnel didn't like us very much in the beginning when the two of us, Brigitte and myself, were there.

SH: Why not? Why didn't they like you?

DG: Because they were not used to do things the way it should be.

SH: I see. So you tried . . .

DG: They were lay people, didn't know any better.

SH: . . . you tried to raise the standards?

DG: Yeah. So it, it was difficult for us to get used first to the new surroundings and then you come from a first-class hospital and start with dirt and lice and straw, you know, it's quite a job to be done. But we were young and we were willing to do it. And, as I said to you before, especially in the beginning when I met people here, I said to my late husband, "People were not worth the effort we put in at times."

SH: Because they didn't understand.

DG: No, and they didn't want to understand. You see, they said they always had the feeling, you were here for me, and you could do much better. Which I might be able to understand today, but not at that time. And then when I heard them here talk about it, everything was too fresh in my memory. But it changed. But it was hard too you know, I had to, I couldn't get all my papers from my husband in Berlin. So I had to take extra courses.

SH: In Shanghai?

DG: No, here.

SH: Oh, here. That was, it was hard for you here?

DG: Yeah. But they were then also very nice. In order to take my state boards, of all the papers I couldn't bring the proofs that I worked in gynecology and in the delivery room, and then something about diets, so I, I worked for a half a year to make up for it in all these different departments at Fordham University Hospital, New York, but they were very nice. First of all, I was then head nurse already in joint disease, they gave me leave of absence and Fordham University Hospital, I took the classes there. I worked there and they even paid me. I think I got hundred fifty dollars a month, which was nice, you know. When I finished, before I left, one, the director of nurses called me, they would send me on to college, you know, to take my [unintelligible] degree and would I stay with them? That's very nice, but I couldn't do it to joint disease, they gave me half a year leave of absence in order to take my state boards and everything. And then my husband, my late husband said, "No more studying, you had enough now." I became the supervisor and I took some more classes and I became a supervisor at the hospital. Then we just started to live, we had a little art gallery, and then one day my husband came home from Europe, you know, he went over to sell, to buy art, and he wrote already, he lost a few pounds, and nobody could find out what he had until we got to Dr. Preuss. They said right away, "Six months". They operated on him and in the beginning, he gained a little weight. And, you know, people asked me and we were always full of hope, you know. So I said, "Maybe we are lucky." Exactly, he was operated in August and the ninth of February, he passed away.

SH: Can you tell me about when he was, what work he did in Shanghai, about his work in Shanghai?

DG: Officially nothing.

SH: Before, before . . .

DG: But, but, in Shanghai, you know, also we had art classes and all kind of lectures and he lectured in art. But you know he was so modest. I, I, one day, he made an exhibition in one of the, it was a school, I think it was a . . .

END TAPE 1, SIDE B

BEGIN TAPE 2, SIDE A

SH: So you were talking about his lecture in the Kadoorie school.

DG: And so one night, he gave a lecture and had an exhibition, and a cousin of ours lived in the same hut we lived and we were always, we were very close. And he said to me, "Do you know what? Willy is giving a lecture tonight. He is making an exhibition." So we didn't say anything to him.

SH: He hadn't told you?

DG: No. So we surprised him. We were sitting there in the classroom, you know, and he came in, he looked at me and smiled. [laughs]

SH: Was that during the war that that happened?

DG: Yes, during the war, yes.

SH: Did he do that often?

DG: Here and then, yeah. But before, he was doing nicely, before we went to the ghetto, because he, there was a bookstore that belonged to a fellow from Berlin. I don't know what happened, he wasn't quite kosher, you know. He made some business and the Japanese put him into prison. He got out later on, I think they live in Canada.

SH: Do you remember the name?

DG: Heinemann.

SH: Heinemann? Now what does that have to do with your husband?

DG: Because we, I think, Willy sometimes gave him some pictures, you know, to sell and so on. But I don't know really what happened. That happened after we left.

SH: So before the ghetto . . .

DG: Yeah. We were doing nicely.

SH: . . . your husband, your husband was buying and selling art . . .

DG: Yeah.

SH: . . . that was what he did?

SH: And was it European art that he would sell, or Chinese, did he do any Chinese art?

DG: Well, you know, he knew, he knew about art, he studied art in Berlin, you know. So for instance, in the ghetto, one day he came home and he said, "I saw a picture in that little store." You know there were stores, they bought and sold things, all kinds. "And I'm sure there is something original underneath." I think he bought it for twelve dollars and sure enough there was a Goya underneath that was just painted over. So, and he knew what to do with it. He knew art. But he didn't want to stay in America. He always said to me, "Would you go with me to live in France?" He always wanted to live in Paris. He thought we would live there and he would travel to America, bring art, you know, and sell it. It didn't work out unfortunately. We just started to

live here.

SH: He, his business, when you got to Shanghai, his business did very well very quickly?

DG: Yeah. He started out, you know, he took some Kollwitzes under his arm and some other things . . .

SH: And sold them?

DG: . . . and offered them to stores. You know, first he went around, and he knew already about the stores. Yeah, that's how he started.

SH: And then he started to buy more things and sell things?

DG: Yeah, buying and selling, yeah.

SH: And before you . . .

DG: And, yes?

SH: Go ahead, what were you going to say?

DG: No, I didn't say anything.

SH: Before you went to the ghetto, who was he buying art from? Where . . . ?

DG: Before we went to the ghetto? Well, he, well, first of all, we went to the ghetto after the American, after America entered the war. Before that he was in contact with America, too.

SH: So, were things being sent back and forth?

DG: Yes, but we didn't buy so much. But the thing is that he knew, that our things got there.

SH: I see.

DG: Yeah, we kept in touch with the people in Baltimore . . .

SH: So you had some things waiting in America?

DG: Yes. And then he made a few exhibitions in Shanghai, too, in, at that department store.

SH: Wing On.

DG: Wing On, yeah.

SH: Were these . . . ?

DG: Mostly graphic.

SH: Were these so that they could be sold, exhibitions so they could be sold?

DG: Yes. Yes.

SH: So with your salary, and with what he was making, you did very well?

DG: Right. Yeah. Yes, but not, not in the ghetto.

SH: No, not, in the ghetto he couldn't.

DG: In the ghetto, you couldn't do anything.

SH: And so then in the ghetto, you . . .

DG: But you see, I got my food in the hospital and I brought it home so it was enough for us.

SH: Did it change things for you?

DG: So we didn't have to go to the official, to that . . .

SH: To the kitchen?

DG: *Abspeisung*, yeah, the Kitchen Fund, yeah.

SH: You didn't want to do that?

DG: No. Well, we didn't want to depend on them, if we didn't have to. We didn't want to take somebody else's away. You know, we could manage that.

SH: Did it change things that in the ghetto, he wasn't making money and you were making money, that you were supporting the family instead of him?

DG: It hurt him. But I was never conscious of it. But, you know, before he died, he knows about this, he read the letters, he wrote two wonderful farewell letters to me. And in one letter, he said he, how happy we were and he can never thank me enough that I never let him feel that I was the one who was earning the money in the times where he was not able, not allowed to work in his profession and independent of time, I should not be alone and I could not be alone. I only should keep him in good memory and I should get married, if I find someone who's [unintelligible] . That was his farewell letter. And then about his life.

SH: So even though . . .

DG: Because we really had, you know, most of the time we were married, he was not allowed,

not in Germany officially.

SH: So in Germany, too, he was not allowed to work?

DG: Yes, officially not since '33 and we got married '38. So you see, when I was in charge of the department, I took it so my husband could live there too. So he was very well taken care off. As a matter of fact, he was fed better than I was, because he, we had a beautiful room in the main building, where all the office worker and employees lived. And he was fed like the hospital employee, while I was fed, you know, on the hospital floor which was still different.

SH: Like the patients were fed.

DG: He was treated like *Beamter*, you know.

SH: That bothered him, to be dependent on you?

DG: It bothered him to be dependent. Also, we had a little money, he wasn't really dependent, you know.

SH: Now, if I could, I just have some more questions about . . .

DG: Yes.

SH: . . . when you were in Germany. Did the Kristallnacht change things for you at the hospital? How did that affect things?

DG: The Kristallnacht? Well, I tell you, we were living in Berlin, in a very nice neighborhood and we lived with a family. One of her brothers was a famous, well-known artist, Hermann Struck. I don't know if you know about him?

SH: No.

DG: It was a family and we lived at the Bundesratufer in, in a very nice neighborhood. And I went to work with tram to the hospital and I noticed, you know, first of all, they started out and painted everywhere, "*Jude*", and you know, so they knew already which store has a Jewish owner. So you just saw glass, and nothing, not burning, but everything demolished.

SH: This is the next morning?

DG: They came to department, to some apartments, too, in smaller cities, but not in Berlin. And then I came to the hospital and they said, "Did you see anything? They say the synagogues are burning." They are going to, and they interned people in the streets, Jewish people. So I called up my husband and said, "Stay home, don't leave." At that time, he knew something already, but I didn't know that they come to the apartments, too, to look for people. There was another thing before. In summer '38, they made it a law that all Jewish people who have, have to, I don't know, who had money had to go to, to the Finanzamt, and they had to declare how much money they

had.[12] And you know, we had about not quite ten thousand Mark, and due to the fact that Willy was forbidden to work and I had a cousin who was bank director. He said, "Under no circumstances, don't say anything, don't declare anything, because they wouldn't think you have any since you . . ." And that saved us, because they went into the apartments to all the people who were in higher positions and took them to the concentration camp. And the hospital too. They took a lot of people, all the people who were in charge of departments, you know, administrative, they took them all.

SH: When did they take them?

DG: Some of them didn't come back. Kristallnacht.

SH: In that night. But they didn't bother you or your husband?

DG: No, no. But, you see, slowly, I start to remember things. But all those, we had a lot of Gentile people who were employed at the hospital in the kitchen and all over, they became the worst. We had a *Luftschutz* watch, you know, everything was dark on account of the war. Every night she wanted to take me to the police, because you could see just a little light through the window at night. Every night I had the trouble. Later on, I was dreaming about this. I woke up, I was [unintelligible] . "I take you to the Gestapo, I take you to the Gestapo!"

SH: She was the one who was in charge? Because there was too much light?

DG: Sure. Then it got worse and worse. On Yom Kippur in '38, they took all our radios away, and then . . .

SH: From your apartment or from the hospital?

DG: Yeah. No, you had to bring it to a certain place, God help you if you didn't. You were afraid, because of the, you couldn't trust the Jewish people either. We had, we had, one of the Gentile people, [unintelligible] there was one girl who was serving food for the employees and she had a radio at night. Most of them stayed with her to listen to the music. Then, we had, while I was there already, we had, the head of the hospital government was Dr. Dr. Lustig and he had the best connections with the Gestapo. And in exchange, he had to get the lists ready for people to be deported. And he had a girlfriend, her name was Illa Stein, she lives somewhere in the States. Tell you one example, but don't take that name out a lot. She was in charge of surgery floors and she was sick. She came back and she said to the doctor in charge, "Dr. Fischer, didn't you miss me while I was sick?" "Oh, if I should be honest, no. Not too much, everything went very smoothly." The next one on the list was her and his wife. His wife survived until in Theresienstadt, but he was transported from there to Auschwitz, he never made it. And we had another nurse and several people who worked with the Gestapo, too. We had one nurse, she was

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[12] On April 26, 1938, the Nazi government issued the Order Requiring the Declaration of Jewish Property, which forced all Jews to declare their holdings in Germany over 2000 Mark, including art, jewelry, and businesses.

sitting on their lap and patting them and pretending being good friend and finding out who was on the next list. She did it the other way around, she told the people before, so . . .

SH: So they could go.

DG: . . . so they could get away somehow. So I have a good friend, she lives in Florida now, she and her husband were hiding in a private place during the war with some Gentile people, and so did other people, too. The Jewish Hospital, one part, I think it was the pathology department, was, made, was cleaned up and used as a *Judenlager*. There were mostly people who had mixed marriages. We have friends, the husband was a Gentile, and he was sitting in Plötzensee in prison, because he helped Jewish people to escape. She was in the *Judenlager*, had to do all kind of work there. She lived in the city, she had to walk every day, because later on, everything was destroyed already through the air raids and everything. With the *Judenstern*, and she survived and then he came out of prison. They're both dead now. They lived in, at last in Kew Gardens. Before, they lived in Jamaica, when they first came and he was book *Antiquar*, so all friends of my late husband. But during the war, you will read it in this book, it's everything that happened and it really was like that. You were afraid, you didn't trust the next one, Jew or non-Jew.

SH: When did you and your first husband first think about leaving Germany?

DG: At first, Berlin, you mean?

SH: Yes.

DG: At first we thought, Willy always said, "I marry you, if you promise me that you see to it that we leave Germany." I said, "I will try," but I didn't have any, because I knew my brother was working to get my mother out and we didn't have any other connection. And the brother here, he sent us affidavit when it was too late. He could have done it right after we got married. You might not believe it. He's dead today, I always tried to smooth it out with my husband, they did so many things he didn't like. And before he died, I said, "Don't you want to see Franz?" "No." But somebody else called him. You might not believe it, his wife said, "If he can see to it that he doesn't have to see one of his patients, *Analytiker*, then he will come. So he came just the moment my husband passed away. And I'm glad he didn't come earlier. But I let him see, you know. When she called me afterwards and said, "Why didn't you call us?" I didn't have the heart to tell her, he didn't want to see. I just wanted to have peace, it was a little thing. But while we were still in Shanghai, he wrote to us that they will send us affidavit, but we have to obligate ourselves never ever to ask them for any help. No children, they didn't have any children. I'll never forget, we arrived here and they lived at that time, it was very swanky, 12 East 87th Street, between Madison and Fifth Avenue. And she, she said to me, "I saw a blouse down there in a store on Madison Avenue, and it's just right for you." I thought to myself, my goodness, she wants to buy me something. I remember myself today, the blouse was five dollars, it was a lot of money. And at that time, [unintelligible] and I remember we bought her a beautiful gift, a hand embroidered tablecloth from Shanghai. Instead of saying thank you, you know, that was the first present I ever get from that part of the family. When they died, well, I just, Willy in his letters, there were seven children, he was the youngest. And he said, keep in touch with, only with the ones who were close to him. [unintelligible]

SH: So when you were still in Berlin . . .

DG: Yeah, so, yeah . . .

SH: Tell us, tell me . . .

DG: Yeah, at first, we thought we go over the *grüne Grenze*, you know, over the border just with a backpack and go to Israel. That was it. And then . . .

SH: When did you think about doing that?

DG: In '39, the beginning of '39. Then we moved to the hospital and I was in charge there, they made a mistake there, you know.

SH: In the book?

DG: Yeah. My name is not mentioned, there is somebody else's name, but she was after I was. But that's all right, it doesn't matter. I have still standing invitation to come there, you know. We had the seventy-fifth anniversary two years ago, there was a big party and we were invited, both of us, but we couldn't go because Benny was sick. So we didn't go. But, then, you know, we lived in the hospital and we felt somehow not safe, but for a while we didn't think of going, because still it was quite dangerous and Israel wasn't so easy either. So then we heard about that four hundred dollars *Vorzeigegeld* in Shanghai, so we found out from our friends that we, it could be done.

SH: So you thought at first you couldn't go to Shanghai . . .

DG: Yeah.

SH: . . . and then you thought you could?

DG: And, well, you know, still it was war, that was the last to go to Shanghai and we thought, we go to Shanghai, and wait for our for affidavit there. We had an affidavit, but we had a very high registration number, so we couldn't wait for it, because we would end up in the concentration camp. So, now, how do we get the passage to go? So they said to get in touch with the, was it the Italian Lloyd, something like that.

SH: Who said to get in touch?

DG: There was a Hilfsverein already in Berlin, in the meantime, there was a Hilfsverein. There was a Jewish Kulturbund and . . .

SH: This is even after the war started?

DG: No, no, no. Right after '38.

SH: I see.

DG: Before already, because Jews couldn't go to the theater, they couldn't go to the movies. So we had everything. We had theater, we had movies, we had concerts, everything Jewish from the Jewish Kulturbund. So we heard through the Jewish organization that this was possible. I went to the Italian, Lloyd Italian . . .

SH: Lloyd Triestino.

DG: Lloyd Triestino, right. So, you know, everywhere I went, I went in my nursing uniform.

SH: Purposely because you thought that would help?

DG: Yeah. And I was told, you have to give them some money under the table. And you know I was so bashful, I was so ashamed to do. So I had an envelope, which was I think it was sixty Mark, which was a lot of money. And he saw already, you know, and he could see I was [unintelligible] . So he said to me. "Oh, leave that envelope there, that's all right, that's all right." And then somehow I managed to get the passages. But that we paid in Berlin, that money we had. I don't, I don't recall how much it was. It must have been, at least, I think, sixteen hundred Mark or so, something like that.

SH: So it was very expensive?

DG: Yes, yes.

BG: Didn't the Jewish community pay for you, because Vienna, in Vienna, everybody got, got paid, the Jewish . . .

DG: No, we didn't, we had to pay that.

BG: . . . the Jewish community paid for everybody who had, who could prove he has a way to go, passport, they paid any fare wherever, and that was in Vienna.

DG: Yeah, but that was after the war Benny.

BG: No, before the war.

DG: Oh, when you went to Latvia?

BG: No, that they didn't pay me. But I, no, that I paid myself, but they would have paid me, yes. They would have if I would go. I didn't have time to go then, because I had in a hurry to go out. But I know, my brother Emil was at that time in the *Komitee* and he paid the people out.

DG: Oh yeah, he was . . .

BG: One of them, yeah. Yes, I know it. Everybody could go what had a visa or something to

show he can get out, that paid for anything, the card, yeah.

SH: What was the name of that committee that your brother was part of?

BG: This is the Israelitische Kultusgemeinde in Vienna.

SH: In Vienna.

BG: They paid for everyone.

DG: Yeah, we had a Kultusgemeinde in Berlin, too. And from there was formed the Jüdische Kulturbund.

BG: I have to tell something. The Israelitische Kultusgemeinde in Genoa was very well off. They had lots of money and they had lots of property, which the Nazis took away and gave it back after the war. So they had enough money.

SH: To pay for people to go.

BG: Yes, yes. Besides there were some very rich people too, Jewish big businesses, I know, had to give any of it, took them away. But the Israelitische Kultusgemeinde paid. After the war, too. After the war, I didn't take from, for England I went alone to, to England, I paid myself, because if I need to go to America, you know, I will ask them. And they paid the half of it and I had to pay them back here in America. I had to pay them back. I paid them back every penny, even every telegram was sent for me I paid back. Not everybody did, but I paid them back [unintelligible] . But it was a lot of money.

DG: Of course, we didn't have a cabin together. I went with three other ladies and Willy had a cabin with somebody else. [laughs] It's funny to talk about, but I remember there was one couple who had a single, who had a cabin to themselves, so they let us use it. [laughs] We had certain days, you know. That's the way it was and today you laugh about it, you know.

SH: In those last months in Berlin, did you and your husband talk with other Jews about leaving and about how you were going to leave?

DG: You know what? When we, when that happened to us at Innsbruck, I told you Willy was a pessimist, he said to me, "If I should ever emigrate, I will never tell anyone," for people envied you, of course. You know, even your best friend, even though they were happy for you. Of course, it was natural.

SH: Did some people say, "You shouldn't leave, it'll be all right?"

DG: Oh, many people thought, that can't go on, you know. My mother, you know, when Hitler came to power, my mother said, "Oh, he will not last long, it's impossible, it couldn't be." And we lived in Upper Silesia so until '37, they, there was a special law for certain parts of Germany which were protected and then after that, it was even worse. My mother could have gone, but she

didn't.

SH: Did you have other conversations with other members of your family or your husband's family about going to Shanghai? He had all these other brothers, did they . . . ?

DG: You know, I tell you, Shanghai was the last. They always said, only people who have been in prison, the worst people go to Shanghai.

SH: Who said that?

DG: Everybody. That was known, "*Verbrecher gehen nach Shanghai*," so to speak. So, even though it was war, even as we said, we only go to Shanghai to wait for our affidavits, then we go to America, which was our intention. We didn't know we would stay. But, you know, even in wartime you were, so to speak, almost ashamed to say you go to Shanghai.

SH: Because of its bad reputation?

DG: Yeah. It's unbelievable today, you know. But there was no other possibility and the Chinese saved our lives, no matter how, they saved our lives. That's what Benny always says. The Russians, they still saved his life under terrible conditions.

SH: When you first arrived in Shanghai, what did you think, how did you feel?

DG: Well, I don't know. You know, first of all, the trip to Shanghai. We didn't know, you see, on our boat, that was the last boat, who took soldiers to Ethiopia and also, you know, Italian officers. This boat had a mission. And you know when we came to Naples, they were exercising, you should see, everything for the war. They prepared for war. Young boys, twelve, fourteen years old in uniform, everybody. So our trip went from, we started out in Genoa, then the first stop was Naples, then we went to, through the Strait of Messina, then we went to, through the Suez Canal, then we went to Bombay, Ceylon, and then we went, it was beautiful. It was beautiful. But we were not allowed to get out, because for the, we were Germans, you know, for the English, we were the enemies.

SH: Did anyone, was anyone able to get off? Any Jews?

DG: No. But people came to the boat. People came to the boat from the committee there.

SH: In all of these ports?

DG: Yes. And then we went, Ceylon, we went to Singapore, we went to Manila, and in Manila we were allowed to get out.

SH: Really?

DG: And I never forget it. It was so hot and it was so humid. It was beginning of June and I guess they assigned families to take care of so-and-so many people. And we spent most of the day

in an air conditioned restaurant and were drinking Pepsi-Cola. I never touched it until lately. I was so sick when we came back to the boat. You know the change of climate and the cold and restaurant and the humidity and the heat at that.

SH: So all you were able to do was get off the boat and go into this restaurant?

DG: Only in Manila, yeah. We didn't see anything of Manila.

SH: Why were you able to get off there and not other places?

DG: I don't know, I think, because it was American, it was American, that's why, American.

SH: Did some people try to stay there in the Philippines?

DG: No, you couldn't. That was impossible.

SH: You knew that you couldn't stay.

DG: We had one lady who got off in Singapore because her daughter lived there, so she went to Singapore. And we had good friends, they emigrated before us to England. They had a brother in Singapore and he came to visit us, he came to the boat.

SH: So he knew you were on the boat?

DG: Yes. He, his relatives wrote to him and he came. And then from Manila, we went to Hong Kong, and Hong Kong, Shanghai. I remember, Willy called me, said, "You know what? There is the Bund, there is the Bund, we are in Shanghai." And then my cousin was there and so on. You know, we had somebody there, which made a lot of difference and the room was nice where we were and we were glad to be without, you know, without any strange people. We had one room to ourselves from then on. And my cousins took us around first, you know, show us the city. We were fascinated, of course, went to the China Sea. And then very soon we made contact both of us professionally.

SH: How about your social life after work?

DG: Oh, we had always had a big social life. We had wonderful friends and circumstances kept us even closer together.

SH: Among friends you mean?

DG: Yes.

SH: So, what did you do with friends?

DG: Where? In, in the ghetto?

SH: In Shanghai, yes.

DG: Some of the friends were financially well off by selling their belongings, you know, but they brought along, I'd say, they were in manufacturing business of clothes, and so they brought material. They brought half of their business. They emigrated early enough where you could take out from Berlin, you could use a *Lift*, you know. So that was different. With money, you could get anything.

SH: So, you would go out with these friends, or . . . ?

DG: Oh, yes. You don't know the Jewish people. They are always on top somehow, which was good, you know, the spirit is there. We had coffee shops, we had, there were two brothers in San Francisco, they were first employed, Levine is their name. Did you know about them?

SH: I've heard about them.

DG: One of them had a lot of trouble, he was in charge of the Hilton in Vegas, and it was lost. They are both retired now and their father, they were terrible in Shanghai. They were such snobs, you have no idea. It so happens that one of my cousins by marriage is related to them, but not on the father's side, on the mother's side. She was a lovely lady. I knew them very well. And they had, they called it, Dachgarten, it was a caféhouse you know on the roof, with a band and everything. People went there.

SH: Was that the Mascot?

DG: Mascot is something else, I think, it was a bar.

SH: That was Roof Garden Mascot?

DG: Maybe it was named, I don't know, maybe it was Mascot Dachgarten. But, that was a real . . .

SH: With a band?

DG: Yeah, yeah.

SH: I met a man who, Henry Rossetty, who . . .

DG: Yeah, he lives here, I know him very well.

SH: He played in the band.[13]

BG: Yes, he was a band leader, Rossetty.

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[13] See interview with Henry Rossetty, Laguna Hills, California, June 8, 1990.

SH: Was that the same band that you were talking about, or was that a different, was that in this Dachgarten? Is that where he played?

DG: No. I don't know where he was. You know, I was too busy. People knew me, but I didn't know them. I knew them as a patient, but I really didn't have much time. So I spent mostly in people's house and to come back to that part, when one night, my husband's cousins came home and said, "What? You are all sleeping? The war is over." So my husband said, "If that is true, I never celebrate, make any special celebration, but this year I will celebrate my first day." And sure enough, as soon as the war was over, we went out of the ghetto and bought Chinese rice wine. My husband surprised us all. We had a big party. He engaged an accordion player, a Viennese, who sang all the Viennese, we had a big party. We put two rooms together and one of the inhabitants of our house was a tailor, so they had a long table, you know, where he did the patterns, cut the material, so we put the top of the table over two stands and the lady who was in charge of the kitchen of the hospital, she fixed special sandwiches. Of course I paid for that. Then my husband made a nice drink, *ein Bolle mit dem Reiswein mit Erdbeeren*. As soon as we had not even one glass, we were all drunk and in seventh heaven. He even ordered a photographer to take pictures and you could see that ruined lane after the bombing. But we lived, that was the main thing, and young we were too. Then, afterwards, of course, we went back to the city to visit with friends. People moved back to the city. But we knew that we will leave soon. We knew that.

SH: You wanted to leave as soon as possible?

DG: To America, yeah. The war ended in '45 in August and we left in January '47. They started to call up people with an affidavit in late '46 and we were among them. We went with the second transport, with the *Truppen-*, troop transporter, "Marine Lynx" was the name of the boat. Was I sick! It was terrible, we had big, big rooms. The men in one room. But the food was good, for us, like heaven. And you know what was so nice? People came on the boat before we left and the Americans fed everybody. Americans were very nice to the children too, you know. And of course, the Jewish ladies who worked in the bar, they made good money, too. But we had a social life during the war. We went to the concert, we went to the opera, operetta. Everything among the inhabitants. There were some people who were trained singers and artists. So we always kept up the spirit somehow.

SH: Where did your friends, the people that you were close friends with, were they Germans or Germans and Austrians or . . . ?

DG: Mostly German. It was terrible in Shanghai, the Yeckes and the Austrians. I never knew it before, I never experienced it before. They were like enemies at times.

SH: The Germans and the Austrians?

DG: Yeah. I don't know why, I mean, I personally had no experience. I had the best experience, but some of the people, I don't know, some times they were, they envied each other, because one was a little better off than the next one. And people who lived so close together in the homes. They had nothing else to do. The food they got, a bed they got, you know, so . . .

END TAPE 2, SIDE A

BEGIN TAPE 2, SIDE B

DG: And then, of course, you know, there were [unintelligible] , did you know, when they just lived together, they're not married. He has a wife somewhere else. That was, that was natural. There was nothing, but people really demoralized unfortunately.

SH: Can you tell me about delivering babies?

DG: Yeah.

SH: Were, did most women who were delivering babies come to the hospital, or did some of them have their babies at home?

DG: Yeah. Most of them came to the hospital. Unless, I remember once, I was walking with Dr. Neger from work and somebody called, "Come in, come in, come in fast!" I said, "What's the matter?" "The woman is losing her baby." So we took a kitchen knife, boiled it to make it sterile to cut the umbilical cord, she delivered her baby. But most of them came to the hospital.

SH: They mostly came to the hospital.

DG: Yes. And they stayed a week. It's not like here. It was a happy surrounding. The children were born, it was nice. We usually gave them a slight anesthesia. There was no time and nobody was bothered those times with natural childbirth.

SH: Did you have to treat a lot of sexual diseases at the hospital? Was there . . . ?

DG: Very seldom, no, no, no. I remember one case in Berlin, we had, no, no, it was in Shanghai, yes, one case had syphilis. And we had a patient with malaria and he had an attack. We took his blood, we didn't have anything else and that was one way to treat it. We took the blood of the malaria and gave it to the syphilis patient, I remember that. But other than, we didn't have, they went, unless you know like at the hospital where I had that priest with gonorrhea, but in a private room. He had a private nurse.

SH: Because of the unusual circumstances in the ghetto, do you think that there was, were there more women who had children outside of marriage? Were there illegitimate children?

DG: No. No, we didn't, no. We didn't have, no, we didn't have any . . .

SH: That didn't happen?

DG: No.

SH: How about abortions? Were there . . . ?

DG: Here you see one, unfortunately. Maybe it was fortunate. I was pregnant just when we got to the ghetto. I got to the doctor, who said, "In these days, Jewish women shouldn't have children."

SH: So did many people think that this was a bad time to have children?

DG: Yes, some did, yeah. Some did. But you know there were so many children born. But when my husband passed away, I thought maybe it was meant that way, you know. What would I have done with a twelve-year old, working, not being able to take care. So everything has a purpose I believe, I don't know.

SH: So if someone wanted an abortion in the ghetto, that, you could arrange that?

DG: Well, it was not legal.

SH: It wasn't legal. But it's hardly ever legal, but could it be done at your hospital?

DG: No.

SH: It had to be done privately?

DG: Yes. Not in the hospital.

SH: So some of the private doctors would do that?

DG: Right.

SH: And that was that known, was it . . . ?

DG: I had one case where a Chinese lady had a curettage and was brought to our hospital because she was perforated and she had to have a hysterectomy there. That was the only case I know of. But we didn't do them in the hospital, no. We were afraid, you know, if something happens, which is always a possibility.

SH: So do you think that, that couples tried to avoid having children more in the ghetto than they would have?

DG: Yes, of course, of course. On one side, then when the war was over, the boom started.

SH: Really?

DG: Oh yes, yes.

SH: So you had more babies born in the hospital then?

DG: Oh sure, sure. They were born during the war too, but, in the ghetto, but you see, I was in Hongkew when it became a ghetto. It was four years, let's see, '43 to '47, '47 we left. And the war ended '45, end of '45.

SH: So you saw some of this baby boom?

DG: Yeah. It was nice, because then we had everything. And I knew I wouldn't stay, you know, I knew already, it's different. In the meantime, we had people I could rely on. I didn't have to stay there day and night any more, which made it easier, too.

SH: Doris, I don't think I have any more questions.

DG: Okay, I hope I gave you enough information.

SH: Oh, absolutely, wonderful information.

DG: Okay. What did Oschinsky tell you? She couldn't tell you much.

SH: She told me mostly about her own life. Most people can only tell me about their own lives. But because you were in this hospital, you can tell me about a lot more things.

DG: Yes. And I met a lot of people.

SH: But if I hear enough people, different people telling me about their own lives, then I can add that up and find out what it was like. I haven't yet met anyone who lived in the *Heime*, in the homes. All the people I've talked to lived outside of the homes. So I don't really have a sense of what it was like.

DG: Right, she, oh, in the homes, you mean?

SH: Yeah, I don't have a sense of what it was like to live, to spend the war in the homes, because I haven't spoken to anyone who was, who was in there. Except for a day or two when they arrived or something.

DG: Well, what would have been most depressing for me was that, first of all, that they didn't start to work or do anything. And then, you know, the moral aspect, because they lived so close together. One knew of the other. You have to think of us like big rooms and they were just separate by little curtains, so to speak, you know, like in the hospital, but not even that kind of curtain.

BG: This I can tell you, all living together, because . . .

DG: Yes, he did, he lived himself.

BG: Yes, in the barracks with women. The women from the men were separated.

DG: Yes, but there, Benny, were couples.

BG: But everybody knew everything what's going on. If a child was born or not born, [unintelligible] in our place we had quite a lot with children. Even one I know had two children in camp, one from a Polack, and one, from two different people. And they knew everything from each other. And the children were living there, too. The children looked through what the parents did, what the mothers did. And you knew everything. Besides between Germany and Vienna is a big difference how it started. Ours started right away, tenth of March, in the same day they did the worst thing. What they did, what they didn't do in five years in Germany from '33 to '38, they started the first day in Vienna. *Die Nacht der Langen Messer*. The next day they pulled out the Jews [unintelligible] . . .

DG: Here is the invitation, "Messieur et Madame". We have a nephew who lives in Geneva, gorgeous, smack at the lake with a view. And the boy will be bar mitzvah and the bar mitzvah will take place in Israel. We plan so far everything, we didn't plan the trip yet, because we know in the last minute if we can go or not. So whether we will go or not. So we'll see.

SH: So maybe I should finish, turn off. Unless you have any other special story that you remember or incident that . . .

DG: You know, it comes back to you, but it's so far in the past. I'm really surprised I know that much. I remember that much.

SH: Maybe . . .

DG: Because for a time, I didn't want to remember. If I think of something, I'll let you know.

SH: Would you maybe say something about how you think that time in Shanghai affected your life, or affected the way you think?

DG: In a way, it affected us because those were, our, the best years of our life, so to speak. And don't forget, I started so many times in life, first when I got married. Then we went to Shanghai. Then we came to New York. In New York I had to take my state boards and start all over again, and that is the only satisfaction I have. That I believed that I helped my husband to become again what he used to be, to work in his profession, and get where he wanted to. Unfortunately, he didn't enjoy it for a long time. I couldn't, of course, it was very, very hard and it was very depressing at times. But, on the other hand, it was gratifying to help people and to do the best you could with the least means to do it. I am an optimist and my mother taught me that already. No matter how bad things are, always take the best part of it. If I wouldn't have done it, so to speak, inherited from my mother, I wouldn't have survived. So it has its good parts and its bad parts. Professionally, I had a chance, I can tell you, nobody had. Because I had to do everything, so that was an experience more than a lifetime. What I think of the Chinese, I can only say the best of them. Their mentality, in the beginning, it was hard to digest it, so to speak. On the other hand,

you get used to it, and at the end, you'd know that they were very helpful. We lived among the lowest class of the Chinese, but they helped us. They showed us how to make coal out of dirt and water, how to use the Japanese oven. After the war, we reciprocated. For them, we were *mibau*, *mibau* is foreigner, *mibau* is bread. *Gnagonin* is a foreigner. So when our parcels came from America, from our relatives, they were really something. We will call them to the front of our house, because our room was not big enough and everybody got, when the Care parcels came, we always gave them something. We were glad we could do it, because they were really very, very helpful. On the other hand, you know, Chinese people laugh or cry, there is no medium. They can laugh if they sense and see that somebody gets buried, *gnagonin*, not their. If one of their people is dead, they engage special people just for crying, to lament and, you know, to cry.

Oh, what I didn't tell you is what was very bad when we first came, all the beggars in the streets. The women had the children tied like a dog with a leash, you know. And they hit them and molested them, until they cried and begged and then they came, you should see, *"Gnagonin, gnagonin! Mibau, mibau!*" You know, bread, bread. That was terrible. And it was so dirty in Shanghai. That changed everything under the Russians, I understand. I haven't been back, so I don't know. But that was very, very depressing in the Settlement. We didn't see it so much in Hongkew. And then, after the bombing, until they took care of all the dead people, I'm not talking about the refugees, the Chinese, you know, you went in the streets with the mess like that. You couldn't stand the smell, it took them days to take care of all the dead bodies, it was terrible.

So, like everything else, it had its bad times and its good times, and the bad side and the good side. And if you were an optimist, you tried to forget the bad times. That's all I can tell you. You can't forget it completely, but you try. I remember for instance, when I came to South Africa, I hadn't seen my brother for sixteen and a half years then. We started talking and he said, "Tell me, how was it when you came to the border and you had to go back?" I had forgotten about it already, somehow. But the spirit we kept and I think that's what kept us alive. You know we tried and we tried not to demoralize, because we saw what could happen. We are thankful for that, that it didn't happen to us. You never know what circumstances, and some people are inclined, so it happens to them even [unintelligible] . They didn't tell you, anyone about that, about Shanghai? The people you met?

SH: No, I've heard a lot of, a lot of stories about Shanghai.

DG: I don't know what Mrs. Oschinsky did. She claims that she's a nurse, but I don't know. She didn't work in our hospital.

SH: I've forgotten really, what she told me.

DG: Oh, you didn't talk to her lately?

SH: No, I talked to her last year.

DG: Oh.

SH: A year ago.

DG: So who really told you about me, I wonder.

SH: I'm trying to remember who. Is it possible . . . ?

DG: Did you meet any doctors of Shanghai in New York?

SH: No.

DG: There's for instance, a Dr. Herbert Gruenberger, he's my age and his name is Greening now.

SH: Greening?

DG: Yeah, he lives in Long Island. He used to, somewhere in, not Jackson Heights, but in that neighborhood somewhere. He lived there.

SH: I think that I saw your name on the list, I got a list of people who had some connection with the reunion in Oakland, people who were getting the "Hongkew Chronicle". Did you ever get the "Hongkew Chronicle", like a little newspaper?[14]

DG: No, we got an invitation to that reunion, didn't we, in San Francisco.

SH: Well then, I have that list. And I looked on that list to see who lived here in Laguna Hills that I could see. And so I found your name and I didn't know that you had been in the hospital there. I just knew that you lived around the corner from my parents. So I thought it's very convenient to see this woman Doris Grey.

DG: Oh, you didn't know, but I wrote, didn't I write to you?

SH: But then when you wrote to me, see then I wrote to you, just because of where you lived, and then you wrote back and said you were in charge of the hospital, but I had no idea about that before.

DG: Oh you didn't know that.

SH: So that's how I found you . . .

DG: Oh I thought you know it.

SH: . . . that's how I found out about you. Just from that list, just because you live here in Laguna Hills.

DG: So I know the Goldsteins. I forgot they were there. Yes, he was very sick. *Die Goldsteins, weiß Du? Sie hat ein bischen Krummrücken.*[15]

SH: Yeah, she has back problems . . .

DG: Yes.

SH: . . . and he has a new knee.

DG: Who? He?

SH: He has a new knee.

DG: And?

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[14] The "Hongkew Chronicle" was published in California for a few years by the organizers of the reunions of Shanghai refugees, which took place in the 1980s.

[15] See interview with Martin and Ruth Goldstein, Laguna Hills, California, June 25, 1991.

SH: He's all right. Yeah, he was walking around.

DG: Benny has two artificial hips for five years already. And Grundlands . . .

SH: I'll see on Monday. I see them on Monday.

DG: She didn't tell me anything. I don't think I told you about, I told you about you, I didn't have a chance. We used to be together very often, but now they live in Villa Valencia. Who else?

BG: Oschinsky didn't tell you . . .

DG: Oschinsky.

BG: . . . she didn't tell you, about the others. She, she likes to talk.

SH: She likes to talk.

DG: Yes, yes.

SH: Yes, she does. I'm trying to think of who else I saw. Alice Bloomfield, she was very nice.[16]

DG: What did she do?

SH: I don't remember. You know, I speak to people, I spoke to her last year also.

DG: Yes.

SH: And so I don't, I mean, I have it all on tape, but I haven't listened to it so I don't remember.

DG: She's very well, she's no youngster.

SH: No, she's ninety years old.

DG: Your parents must be very young.

SH: Seventy. My father just turned seventy.

DG: Benny's eighty-five and I'm going on eighty. [laughs] Next year. I never felt old enough to live here, tell you the truth. It's very depressing because so many, you see all new people. You know, the old ones are gone already. Did your parents have friends before they came here?

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[16] See interview with Alice Bloomfield, Laguna Hills, California, June 10, 1990.

SH: From New York, yes.

DG: Oh, you see, that's a lot of difference too.

SH: Yes. But they had some friends in Huntington Beach that they still see.

DG: Oh yes.

SH: I think my mother has made new friends here. She plays . . .

DG: Do they belong to the temple?

SH: No.

DG: We didn't either until two years ago. We felt we should belong.

SH: Temple Judea?

DG: Yes. Not that we make use of it, but, I didn't know about your parents either, just through you.

SH: Well, I'm going to turn this off.

DG: Yes.

END TAPE 2, SIDE B

END OF INTERVIEW